

CORRESPONDENCE.

London, Ont., Thursday, Feby. 14, 1907.

To the Editor of the Ottawa Naturalist:

In your issue of May, 1902, I published a notice of the capture of the Longtailed Jaeger at Rondeau. Mr. J. H. Fleming, Toronto, inquired from me about this bird, stating that it was probably the Parasitic Jaeger, not the Longtailed. After a good deal of correspondence with him and study over the matter I met him recently in Toronto and we went over all the specimens carefully together and as a result I am convinced that he is quite correct and that all the characters upon which stress is laid in the books for the separation of these two species are unreliable.

My birds answer to these characters but the important point which is not mentioned in any of the American books is the color of the primary shafts, the Parasitic Jaeger having white shafts throughout and the Longtail having only the first two or three white and the rest dark.

All the remaining characters seem to vary with individuals to such an extent that they become absolutely worthless for diagnosis. Mr. Howard Saunders, London, England, who is considered the great living authority on the gull family, supplied Mr. Fleming with his information and after the careful examination which he and I made of all the available matter, I am not only satisfied that Mr. Fleming is correct but feel that he should be congratulated on such careful work. When the authorities make mistakes it takes exceptional care to find it out.

W. E. SAUNDERS.